

TRACTS

[CHEAP REPOSITORY. Number 14.]

HUSBANDRY MORALIZED;

, pleasant Sunday Reading for a Farmer's Kitchen.



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HUSBANDRY Moralized ;

Or pleasant Sunday Reading for a Farmer's Kitchen

Upon the care of Husbandmen to provide for

W I N T E R.

GOOD Husbandmen are careful in Summer to provide for Winter. They then gather in their Winter store food and fuel for themselves, and fodder for their cattle. He that gathers in Summer is a wise Son, but he that sleepeth in harvest is a Son that causeth shame.

The great beauty and advantage of any action is to do it in its proper season. This season is seldom watched for carefully, and is often lost by delay. 'Tis an excellent proverb that a good saviour will make a good benefactor, "this means that he, that doth not waste, will always have something to give. And there is another—" He that neglects the occasion the occasion will neglect him." The husbandman knows that summer will not hold the whole year, neither will he trust

Kitchen a mild and favourable winter, but in the best season he will provide for the worst.

vide f. What excellent Christians should we be, were we but as provident for our souls, as we are for our Farms. 'Tis a subtle point of true Christian wisdom to look forward to a day of great spiritual difficulties and necessities, and to make provision for it.

A Husbandman knows there is a change of seasons and weather. Tho' it be of a pleasant Summer weather now, yet Winter will tread upon the heel of Summer. Frosts, snows, and a great fall of snow must be expected. This change of seasons in nature is settled by a firm law, the God of Nature to the end of the world, for

"Nature is but the name of an effect,
"Whose cause is God."

Th While earth remaineth "seed time and harvest time, cold and heat, winter and

summer, day and night shall not cease
saith the Scripture.

And Christians should also know that
there are changes in the right hand of the
Most High, in regard to their spiritual
Seasons. If there be a spring time of the
Gospel, abundant opportunities, and yet
neglect to use them; there may come
barren Winter, when we may be depriv-
ed of these privileges. For God, to
punish our deadness and indifference can
send "a famine of the word" as easily as
he can send a famine of bread to punish
sloth and laziness. He can always set
one over against the other, and he that
neglects to use his present abundant gift
"from him shall be taken away that which
he hath."

Yesterday's past, tomorrow's none of thing
THIS DAY thy heart to holy deeds incline

In heaven there is a day of everlasting
happiness, in hell a night of everlasting
misery. But on this earth light and
darkness take their turns; prosperity and

cease diversity, even to souls as well as bodies
 proceed each other. A day of grace and
 merrour is often followed by sorrow and
 heaviness of spirit.

Common prudence and experience en-
 able the husbandman in the midst of
 summer to foresee a Winter and provide
 for it before he feels it, yea instinct teach-
 eth this to the very Birds of the air, and
 beasts of the field.

And spiritual wisdom should teach
 Christians to exercise their foreseeing fa-
 culties, and not suffer them to feel evil,
 ere they see it. But, Oh, the stulti-
 cious nature of sin! tho' the Stork in the
 which heavens knows her appointed time, and
 the turtle, crane and swallow the time of
 her coming, yet man whom God hath
 made wiser than the fowls of the air, in-
 stead, acts quite below them; so says the
 prophet Jeremiah: And so says our own
 daily experience.

The end of God's ordaining a Summer
 season, and sending warm and pleasant

weather, is to ripen the fruits of the earth, and give the Husbandman fit opportunity to gather them.

And God's Design in giving his favoured people a day of grace, is to furnish them with an opportunity for the everlasting happiness and salvation of their Souls. "I gave her space to repent." It is not merely a delay of the threatened wrath, tho' there be great Mercy in that, but the peculiar aim of this patience and bounty of God is to open for them a way to escape the wrath to come—"Despiseſt thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance, and long suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"

The Husbandman does not find all harvest seasons alike favourable; sometimes they have much fair weather, and meet with no hindrance in their business, at other times 'tis a catching harvest, but now and then a fair day, and they must be nimble, or all is lost.

There is also a great difference in the state of people's minds at different seasons; some have had long and merciful opportunities, a hundred and twenty Years did God's patience wait upon the World in the ministry of NOAH. Long did God wait upon the gain-saying Israelites as mentioned in Isaiah. "I have a long time held my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself," others like the husbandmen have a short and catching season, all hangs upon a day, upon a nick of time. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent."

A proper season neglected and lost, is never to be recovered. Many things in husbandry must be done in their season, or cannot be done at all for that year. If he plow not, and sow not, in the proper season he loses the harvest of that year. No future diligence can make up for past neglect; the season the fit opportunity is over and gone.

'Tis so with the state of the mind; the

Gospel neglected, and opportunities despised in the season when God offers them are lost forever. "Then shall they call upon me, but, I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:" then (that is when the opportunity is over) they shall call upon me but I will not hear. Oh, there is a great deal of time in a short opportunity: that may be done, or prevented in an hour rightly timed, which cannot be done, or prevented, in a Man's life time afterwards.

Those Husbandmen that are careful and laborious in the Summer, have the comfort and benefit of it in the Winter: he that provides fuel, shall sit warm in his habitation when others blow their fingers and sit freezing in the cold. He that provides food for his family, and fodder for his cattle in the harvest, shall eat the fruits of it, and enjoy the comfort of his labours, when others are put to shifts and streights.—And he that provides for eternity, and lays up for his Soul a good foundation against the time

s de- to come, shall eat when others are hungry,
 them and sing when others weep and wail and
 call gnash their teeth. Therefore thus
 they saith the LORD GOD, " behold my Ser-
 vants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry
 behold my Servants shall drink, but ye
 upon shall be thirsty; behold my Servants shall
 is a rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed."

nity :
 n an
 done,
 after-
 A day of death will come, and that
 will be a day of terrors to all careless
 souls; but then the diligent active chris-
 tian shall enjoy the peace and comfort
 that shall flow in upon his heart, from his
 lively care, and sincere diligence in du-
 ties,— " This is our rejoicing, the testi-
 mony of our conscience that in sincerity
 and godly simplicity we have had our
 conversation in this World." so Hezeki-
 ah says—" Remember now O LORD how
 I have walked before thee in truth, and
 with a perfect heart."—A Day of judg-
 ment will come, then foolish Virgins who
 neglect the season of getting Oil in their
 lamps, will be put to their shifts; then
 they will come to the wise and say,
 " Give us of your Oil," but they have

none to spare, and the season of buying is then over.

No wife Husbandman will neglect a fit opportunity of gathering in his Hay and Corn, upon a presumption of much fair weather to come; he will not say the weather is settled, and I need not trouble myself, and that I may get it in another time, as well as now—no, no, a wise and prudent Farmer never depends on any time but the present.

And no wise christian will lose present opportunities of studying his Bible, upon the hopes of more time in future; but will rather say, "Now is my time, and I know not what will be hereafter." 'Tis a melancholy thing to think how some men as it were dispute themselves out of Heaven, and argue and reason away their own Souls as if Satan hired them to plead against their own good.

It is well for Husbandmen as well as others while they are providing food and cloath's for their families against Winter,

not to neglect the cure of their Souls
and to provide for a happy Eternity.

It is a great encouragement for Huf-
bandmen, who have families for whom it
is their duty *to provide things honest in
the sight of all men*, to reflect, that the
care of their eternal concerns is so far
from being hurtful to their worldly prof-
perity, that there is every reason to expect
he who casts his care upon God, and la-
bours *to work out his Salvation*, will prof-
per more in his business than a worldly
prophane man, who, as he does not live
in the fear of God, has no right to look for
his blessing, without which it will be in
vain to rise up early, to lie down late,
and to eat the bread of carefulness.

If God then performs all these good
things for you, how should you adore and
magnify him for his care and condescensi-
on. You should say unto him, " Lord
what is man that thou should'st set thine
hand upon him and visit him every mo-
ment." Look then continually up to him

whose mercies are continually poured out upon thee; for he has promised in his holy word that he will guard you and keep you day and night. Should he withdraw his hand or his eye one moment from you, that moment would be your ruin. Ten thousand evils watch for such an opportunity to rush in upon you and destroy all your comforts. But his creatures are too dear to him to be trusted into any hand but his own.

Learn hence how diligently you are obliged to perform all the duties and services of your calling, all the daily labours of your farm for God, with an eye to his glory; for he performeth all things for you. It was once the wish of a very good man, "O that I could be to God what my hand is to me!" that is a serviceable useful instrument.—Shall God do all things for you, and will you do nothing for God? Is providence every moment at work for you and will you be idle for him? will you labour hard for yourselves, for your farms, for your wives and for your children, and will

you be idle for HIM in whom you live and move and have your being? To what purpose then is all that God has done for you? Is it not the aim and design of all to make you a fruitful people? If God plant and fence, and water you by his Providence, sure he expects you should bring fruit. O that in return for all the benefits of Providence you would say to God as grateful Elisha said to the Shunamite, "Behold thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what is to be done for THEE? And with David, What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits." He is ever doing you good; be therefore always abounding in his work. O be active for that God who is every moment acting for you.

THOUGHTS,

Suited to the HUSBANDMAN as he is
Going out to work on the
Monday Morning.

NOW is the day come on, the Sun

peeps over the tops of the Hills, and spreads light over the face of the Earth, the shades of the Night are vanished and the Beasts of prey have laid themselves down in their dens, man goeth forth to his work and to his labour till the evening. As the earth was covered with darkness before the sun's appearing, so was all the Heathen World covered with the dismal Night of ignorance, till the Sun of Righteousness arose and by the Glorious Light of the Gospel dispersed that darkness and shadow of death which benighted the whole World. And what becomes man now, but to go forth to his labours, I mean the work of Religion, and the service of God? whilst we have the light, it is fit we should walk in it, having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but live as becomes the children of light. And this by God's help I resolve to do.

To this he may add the following short

PRAYER.

O GRACIOUS God, who hast of thine infinite Mercy given Light

to us, who sat in darkness and the shadow of death, grant me Grace to live in a manner answerable to the great advantages I enjoy, let me not mispend this precious time thou hast given me, wherein to prepare for Eternity, and to that end, teach me I pray thee, to Glorify thee in the work of my hands, let every thing I do for the maintainance of this frail life, put me in mind of providing for a better. Whilst mine Eyes look down to this Earth, let my Soul look up to thee my God in Heaven; whilst I labour for this meat that perisheth, let me gain that which endureth to Eternal Life, and whilst I work in the business of my calling, let me work out my own Salvation through Jesus Christ. Bless, I beseech thee, all the employments in which I shall be engaged, and grant that I may never undertake any thing upon which I cannot beg thy Blessing. Let me magnify thee in all I do; submit to thy gracious Providence in all I suffer; adore thine infinite goodness in all I enjoy; and make it my meat and drink to do the will of my father which

is in Heaven. Mercifully forgive all my
 sins through the merits of my Blessed
 Redeemer; and not only grant me thy
 pardon for what is past, but thy Grace
 for the time to come. All which and
 every other needful Blessing I humbly
 ask through the merits of my only Lord
 and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Husbandman's HYMN.

GOOD is the LORD, the heavenly King,
 Who makes the Earth his Care,
 Visits the pastures every Spring,
 And bids the grass appear.

The clouds, like Rivers rais'd on high,
 Pour out at thy command,
 Their wat'ry blessings from the sky,
 To cheer the thirsty land.

The soften'd ridges of the field,
 Permit the Corn to spring;
 The vallies rich provision yield,
 And the poor Lab'ers sing.

The little hills on every side,
 Rejoice at falling show'rs:
 The meadows, drest in all their pride,
 Perfume the Air with flow'rs.

The barren clods refreshed with rain,
 Promise a joyful crop:
 The parched grounds look green again,
 And raise the reaper's hope.

The various months thy goodness crown:
 How bounteous are thy ways!
 The bleating flocks spread o'er the down,
 And Shepherds shout thy praise.

T H E E N D

A N
ANTIDOTE
F O R

SLANDERING and BACKBITING.

TO Slander any one, is to report any false thing of him, or to cast any reproachful Name upon him, to the damage of his reputation. And if this proceeds merely from our own evil inclinations and surmises, the sin is absolutely our own, being of our own breeding and birth; and we must answer for all the mischief it does: or, if we take up the report from others, we thereby foster and cherish it: and so make it in some sense our own, by being a nurse to it. And in truth, the case is very bad both ways, being like to the wilful letting loose of a Lion or Tiger among the people;

which, when once gone out of our hands, is never to be brought into safe custody again : and we are truly necessary to all the harm that shall be done by it in its wild range and ravage.

We must in charity to the world think, that the generality of people do not rightly know, or at least do not duly consider, what an extensive and irreparable mischief they do, when they slander any one, more especially any useful and reputable person, raising or rehearsing false reports of him. Otherwise, surely so very base and heinous a crime could not be so frequently practised, and so little lamented.

The mischiefs of a slanderous and lying tongue are so great and many, that they cannot be fully express'd : for St. James tells us, that *there is a world of iniquity in it* ; and that the root of it lies as low as hell itself, from whence it *brings up flames, to set on fire the course of nature*, Jam. iii. 6. Let us however take some sort of estimate of the evil of it in a few serious thoughts.

And here, at the first look, it appears to be a very unhandsome and ungenteel part, to speak evil of the absent, and to smite a man behind his back ; and it is certainly very unfair and unjust dealing to condemn any one, in so tender and valuable a concern as that of his reputation, before he is heard, or allowed to make his defence. Such as have any notions of Justice or of honour will not endure this ; and the charity and integrity of a christian must abhor it : yea, no person of common morals, or of common sense, can allow it : because it is not *doing as he would be done by*. It is like the cowardly robber who shoots out of a thicket, and kills or wounds desperately before he is seen. This sin is therefore called *Backbiting*, being like the sneaking little cur that creeps behind a man's back, and bites his heels, not daring to appear before his face. And for this reason we see, how pitifully the slanderer comes off, if at any time the abused person happens to overhear him, or to fall into his company in the midst of his slanders, whereby he has an opportunity to refute the malicious story, to the confusion

the author and the abettors of it. How basely does he then hang down his named face, and bites his lying lips? With what conscious blushes does he begin to soften his harsh expressions, and to recall his malicious words? or perhaps, with like falsehood, attempts to father them upon somebody else that is absent, who therefore cannot confront him.

Now this is the sowing of those baneful seeds of discord and division, whereby intimate friends are many times set at variance, relations embittered one against the other, the common peace disturbed, commerce destroyed, firms and factions increased, and a whole nation enflamed. Hereby one neighbour is brought to look with anger, and to carry with reservedness towards another; and thence arise parties on the one side and on the other, and these, like the battalions of opposite armies, skirmish, or perhaps engage downright whenever they meet. And where strife is, there is usually every wicked work, Jam. iii. 16. To prevent which, the *Royal Psalmist* resolved to cut

off such as privily slandered their neighbour, as a necessary provision for the common peace, which, as a prince, it became him to preserve, Psal. ci. 5. For where there is no tale-bearer, there strife ceaseth; as where there is no wood the fire goes out. Prov. xxvi. 20.

But how can any one that knows God do a thing so contrary to his righteous and beneficent nature. God is truth and love itself, and all lies and enmity are contrary to Him as darkness to light; but that lie more especially, which is conceived by malice, to destroy love and peace among men: the guilt and punishment of which is described by the Psalmist Psal. lii. 2. 3. &c. *Thy tongue deviseth mischief like a sharp razor, working deceitfully; (as being very smooth and very sharp.) Thou lovest evil more than good and lying rather than to speak righteousness: this is the nature of malice, which ever delights rather to make mention of feigned vices than of real virtues. Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue? (The slanderer seeks to*

neighbour your the prosperity, peace, and good
 name of his neighbour, and therefore his
 words are truly ravenous and devouring;
when shall likewise destroy thee forever:
 as thou lovest to destroy and devour, O
 thou slanderer; so the righteous God will
 recompence thy malice in thy own way,
 and thou shalt be destroyed for ever.) *He*
shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of
thy dwelling-place, and root thee out of
the land of the living. And what is the
 worst of all, when he is rooted out of the
 earth, he will be debarred from entering
 into Heaven: for he only shall *ascend the*
hill of the Lord, and be owned by God as
 member of his Church both below and
 above, *that backbiteth not with his tongue,*
nor doth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh
up a reproach against his neighbour,
 Psal. xv. 3. It is not only said, that he
 doth not raise a reproach against any one,
 but he does not take it up, nor meddle
 with it when it is raised and laid before
 him. He will not defile himself by en-
 tertaining the dirty rumour, nor have any
 hand in forwarding so foul a mischief:
 there is very great danger in the case,

not only for that our present peace and honour will be very much exposed by our meddling with false rumours and reports, but that it will also endanger our everlasting happiness: for *such as love to speak lies*, as well as *those who make lies*, will be excluded from the kingdom of God, *Revelation* xxii. 15. The *Nathaniels*, in whom there is no guile, are the *Israelites* indeed; for the fellowship of him, in whose mouth there was no deceit. But *without* are dogs such as snarled at all passengers, tho' never so harmless, and had many times no other cause for their barking but the noise of other peevish curs. So that we ought always to remember, that *lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, and that such a deal truly are his delight*, *Prov. xii. 22*. And these few words are enough to terrify any sensible person from contracting the least degree of this guilt; and to put him upon *keeping the door of his lips*, that they never transgress the bounds of *truth and charity*.

Especially if we farther consider, that the sin of *slandering* is a high breach of that charity, which is the life and soul of

the *Christian Religion*. 1 Cor. xiii. The
Badge of Christ's Disciples, Joh. xiii. 35.
 and the very temper and constitution of
 such as are *born of God*, 1 John, iii. 10. If
 the grand principle of charity be wanting
 all our deeds how specious soever, are no-
 thing worth, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. But like the
 sacrifices that wanted salt, are unsavoury
 and unacceptable. If there be malice in
 the heart, the *Prayer is leavened*, and the
 gift at the *Altar* unacceptable. It is the
 duty of a Christian, *to speak evil of no man*,
 Tit. iii. 2. *To hate the best of every one*,
 Cor. xiii. 5. *To lay aside all malice,*
and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies,
and all evil-speaking, 1 Pet. ii. 1. *To love*
one another with a pure heart fervently, 1
 Pet. i. 22. And in sum, *All Christians are*
to love one another as themselves, and to
live as members of one another; having
 the same care one for another, and the same
 concern for each other's welfare, with the
 same sympathy in one another's comforts
 and sorrows, as the members of the same
 body, Rom. xii. 5. 15.

But how contrary to all this is the sin of
slandering, which shoots poison'd arrows

against a man's most valued enjoyment, his reputation? A man's good name is many times his livelihood, and by blasting this you rob his family of their bread; and therefore our laws in this case allow any tradesman considerable damages, if he be maliciously aspersed. And the higher the station of the person is, so much the more heinous is the offence, and the more advanced the damages; The best of the heathens had always the tenderest sense of any injury done to their name. The great *M. T. Cicero* says, *That none but people of the most base spirits, and the most flagitious and profligate lives, could be negligent of their reputation.* And it was the common doctrine of their moralists, that since a good name was one of the great Rewards of Virtue, every one ought to prefer his honour before his life; and for the same reason to be exceedingly careful that he never injures others in so sensible a point. And therefore *Socrates* used to say, that *he had rather it should never be said, that there was such a man as Socrates, than that it should be said,*

ent, his was guilty of any vice. For indeed, as many the flandering and backbiting of a man; and does not only diminish the comfort of his life, but likewise renders him less capable of doing good in the world. And in this respect, the flandering of a minister of God will be a more than common aggravation of the crime: For he will not be capable of doing such Good in his sacred office as he otherwise might, where his soul aspersions have lessened the esteem, and alienated the affections of those who are to partake of his exhortations and advice. And although he will have competent measure of comfort in himself, if his own conscience clears him, yet still he will not be so useful to others; for which the slanderer must answer at last before him that judgeth righteously.

And if there were any bowels in the detractor, it could not but grieve him at the heart, to see the sorrow and affliction that he causelessly brings upon an innocent person: and tho' he shifts off the thoughts of this for the present, yet surely the tears of the innocent will one day be more bitter to the person that caused

them, than the person that shed them. Even when their prayers to God vindicate their innocency shall be heard and he shall *reprove with equity for the meek of the earth*, and shall blow the clouds that encompassed them upon the faces of their enemies, and turn all the artillery of their evil speeches against the authors of them.

And whenever the slanderer comes to have thoughts of repentance, there will be this dismal circumstance of his sin, that will set heavily upon him; to wit, that the *damage he has done is in many cases irreparable*. For when a false report is set on foot, it runs many ways, in discourse, in writing, by sea and land: and were the author ever so willing to recall it, he cannot do it: he may ask pardon of the person offended, and may sign a retraction, and print and publish it, and do all he can to stop and stifle the slander; but after all, it is not imaginable that every one that has heard the lie will meet with the refutation of it; so that a full reparation for the injury is not practicable. And this will be matter of

them grief. even after the most solemn repentance. Though the slanderer has by his heard prayers and tears obtained Forgiveness for the both of God and man, yet this does not wholly stop the slander; the false report runs on among those who have not heard all that is refuted; and such as have no mind to stop it should be stopped, will still push it forward: And now the fault has a new aggravation, as committed against one that has been so kind and obliging as to forgive the offence, which gives a deeper sting to an ingenuous mind.

This is one reason why the heavy weight of the sin of murder seldom wears off; though the murdered person be supposed to have time and charity to forgive his murderer, though the fact be so privately committed, that the law can take no hold of him, and though he be truly penitent in the sight of God: Yet forasmuch as the blood of the murdered man is *spilt as water upon the ground*, and can never be gathered up again, and no amends can be made to the injured person, or to his mournful family, for the trespass, the conscience of the murderer

scarce ever regains its peace. Even so likewise in the murder of any one's good name, the reparation being usually impossible, the guilt of it will be proportionably uneasy. He that robs a man in his house, or on the road, may make full restitution for the wrong he does; yea, he may add thereto the overplus of fourfold as in the *Jewish* law: But in the case of slander, he cannot in many cases restore a fourth part. As in the forementioned case of a slandered minister of Christ, by which perhaps the slanderer has hardened many a soul against his ministry; and so may have occasioned their eternal ruin. Now what amends can he make for this? And consequently, what ground has he for a full and constant peace within himself? Since this rule in divinity will ever remain firm, that such a repentance establishes the greatest peace in the breast of the penitent, which does the most fully abolish the ill effects of the sin committed.

Now since this sin is so dreadfully great, one would expect that nothing but an immense advantage could draw people into

the heavy guilt of it: but here there is no kind of proportion, for there is usually nothing gotten by it but the pleasing of a malicious disposition, or a vain delight in telling news, or the humouring of such as are ill affected towards the slandered person or his party. And here we may observe by the way, what ill manners it is to the company, and what a manifest defect in breeding or in sense, to lay before them a parcel of ill-natured lies and calumnies for their entertainment; which is to suppose them ill-bred, as well as ill-natured, and withal, very ill christians; or otherwise such discourse of the absent would rather be offensive than agreeable to them. And therefore one would think it could never be practised by persons of Education, much less of religion, in any of their meetings together.

But there is one common covert for this, which is indeed a great cause of it: and that is, that the people, who are of a party in any matter appertaining to church or state, esteem it as a commendable piece of service to their cause, to

bespatter their opposites right or wrong or if they hear a little matter to enlarge upon it at their pleasure. Those that are of their party they think will be glad of such a story, though never so foul or ill grounded; and they fancy that the cause they advance, will justify all their lies and calumnies, though discharged against the greatest and most valuable persons in church or state. But let them be assured, that the very name of party is hateful to our supreme Lord and Judge, except in the case of *Christ and Belial*; and that all lies and calumnies are abhorred by him. As he never reviled any one, no not the reviler, so has he enacted many solemn laws in his Holy Gospel, to suppress all evil-speaking in such as bear his name; as we see in the scriptures before alledged.

But some may say, what must we do then when we hear ill reports of any one? must we stop our ears, or run out of the company, or impose on ourselves an uneasy silence in things which others take a freedom in? The reply is ready, from the direction of God himself in his Holy

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od: we must not take up the reproach,
 or countenance the malice; but must
 ew our dislike to the thing, and reprove
 e tale-bearer; who may very perti-
 ently be asked, whether he is sure of
 e truth of what he reports? and if he
 ils here, he may well be asked farther,
 ow he can in honour or conscience re-
 ort a thing which is so doubtful in its
 riginal, and yet so pernicious in its con-
 equence? and in a few such seasonable
 and truly christian suggestions may do a
 reat deal of justice to the person aspersed,
 and prevent the spreading of the infection.
 For in this injury, as well as others, if
 here were no receiver there would be no
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And though the report should prove
 true, yet doubtless they are uncharitable
 and unseasonable truths, which ought to
 be suppressed. The sins and follies of
 our brethren, are but a barbarous subject
 for our mirth and entertainment. We
 must *speak evil of no man* in our common
 discourse to his damage, where the men-
 tioning of it, though true, is unnecessary
 and unuseful; but we must rather go pri-

vately to the person himself, and acquaint him with the report : and if it be true and the person impenitent, we may acquaint some grave person with it, who may reprove him with more authority. And we may in the last place *tell it to the church*, that he may be censured and proceeded against, as circumstances require; which is our blessed Saviour's direction in like cases, *Matth. xviii. 15.*

And now in the close, let every reasonable person consider, whether it be not an extremity both of sin and danger, and no less of folly, with respect to both, to become guilty of so grievous a crime as this of slandering, to compass any worldly envy whatsoever; much more where there is little else in view, but the mere gratifying of the malice and envy of our own wicked hearts, in service to the devil. For it is he that is principally gratified and served by this sin, in which the slanderer shapes himself exactly after the devil's image, who is described to be, *the accuser of the brethren*, *Rev. xii. 10.* Yea, in this the devil is many times served rather for love than hire; there being


quain very often no outward advantage to be
 true, escaped from it. But however, the slan-
 ay ac- derer's wages are very certain, and very
 who great, even the everlasting fire prepared
 ority for the devil and his agents, who are his
 to the angels and messengers; where the offen-
 d pro- ve tongue will forever cry out with
 quire unspeakable anguish, *I am justly torment-*
 ion in d in these flames; except a very bitter
 repentance prevents it.

The sum of the whole matter is, that it
 greatly concerns every one to be tender
 of the reputation of another; not only as
 both, he would be so treated by others, but as
 he as he would be approved of God. And for
 worldly this reason, we must be slow to speak, and
 where to receive things of a contrary na-
 mere ture. And for our greater security, we
 f our must pray to the holy and beneficent spi-
 e de- rit of God, to be our keeper and director,
 rati- and to enable us to mortify all malice, en-
 the vy and irregular passions; and to endue us
 the with that heavenly grace of charity, which
 to be, neither wishes nor works evil to any
 io. one, but is ready on all occasions, by its
 fer- comely vail, to cover a multitude of sins.

T H E E N D.

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